

# EXHIBIT P



# A short history of integration in the US armed forces



Published July 1, 2021

By Walt Napier

514th Air Mobility Wing

**JOINT BASE MCGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, N.J. (AFNS) --** With the recent events in 2020, it is important to look back over the events that have been pivotal in breaking down racial barriers. This discussion will investigate the numerous examples of Black military service, with Black Americans fighting in every United States conflict from the American War for Independence to present day. It will also explore how the military valor of African Americans helped end limited martial involvement and segregated military service.

## American Revolution to the Civil War

Black service members have fought in every single American conflict. The U.S. Army History Office estimates around 5,000 warriors in the American Revolution were Black. These men served in the artillery (the most advanced branch of service during the period), the infantry, as laborers, and even musicians. One particular unit, the 1st Rhode Island Regiment, drove George Washington to agree to allow Black Soldiers who were slaves, to earn freedom through service. The regiment earned a reputation for bravery and ferocity. At the Battle of Newport in 1778, the regiment fought so fiercely one of the Hessian officers resigned his commission rather than leading his men against the 1st Rhode Island.

Many of the smaller wars in the 19th century have limited records of service members; wars such as the War of 1812 and the Seminole Wars. It is an undisputed fact, however, that there were Black combatants in these national conflicts. At the Battle of New Orleans, Andrew Jackson promised free Black men who joined him equivalent pay to their white counterparts, while enslaved men were promised freedom. Around 900 freemen and slaves fought at the Battle of New Orleans. Unfortunately, their sacrifice went unrewarded, when after the battle, Andrew Jackson reneged on his promise and sent enslaved men back to their masters.

The next great war, perhaps the most terrible in America's history, came in 1861 when Southern states attempted to secede from the Union. To this day, the American Civil War remains the bloodiest conflict in U.S. history. Abraham Lincoln had won election in 1860 on an anti-slavery platform. The underlying problems, however, went as far back as the American Revolution. It was difficult to understand how a war for liberty could be fought while many on American soil lived in bondage. Following the Revolution, a sticking point to the drafting of the Constitution was the question of slavery. The congress eventually came up with the "Three-fifths Compromise," essentially stating a slave was worth three-fifths of a person for counting population in regards to government representation. The other sticking point was the slave trade itself. Article 1, Section 9, Clause 1 of the Constitution indicated the slave trade would continue for 20 years (ending in 1808) by any state that desired for it to remain legal.

Allowing states to decide whether they were free or not and ending the slave trade created new problems as time progressed. The first issue throughout the 19th century revolved around statehood. Each time a new state would come into the Union, would it be slave or free? From a political standpoint, this meant if slave or free outnumbered the other, political representation (and power) would reflect the disparity. The next issue came about since the slave trade ended in 1808, a slave state could no longer purchase new slaves. This placed a premium on enslaved persons. By the time of the Civil War, the great majority of southern wealth revolved around enslaved peoples. Both from the commodities they were forced to produce, but also the individuals themselves.

Returning to Lincoln's election; the South viewed his anti-slavery platform as cutting their political and fiscal power off at the knees. Despite the clear reasoning for the outbreak of the war, the Lincoln administration was hesitant to allow Black troops to shoulder arms and fight. Lincoln feared armed African Americans would cause a panic in border states, potentially pushing them to join the Confederacy. As the war carried on however, practical need replaced political gamesmanship.

In July of 1862, Congress passed a law freeing any person with a master in the Confederate Army and slavery was abolished in the Union. Needing manpower to continue the war, the Union began allowing Black men to join the fight. One of the first Black units, the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry Regiment, would go on to be one of the most famous. Immortalized in the film "Glory," the 54th MVIR was at first forced to perform manual labor duties. On the outskirts of Fort Wagner, however, their role would change. The men of the 54th MVIR charged the ramparts of the fort over and over, eventually suffering 42% casualties including the death of their commander, Col. Robert Shaw.

[Skip to main content \(Press Enter\).](#)

Despite the tactical defeat, it provided a strategic and moral victory. The valor and ferocity of the 54th MVIIR convinced the U.S. Army to increase the number of African American recruits for the Army. By the end of the war ,186,000 men had served in the Union Army and



## Buffalo Soldiers to Harlem Hellfighters

In 1866, Congress authorized the creation of permanent all-Black regiments. Eventually those units would be designated the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry, and would collectively become remembered as the “Buffalo Soldiers.” The true source of the nickname is up for debate. The most believed origin is that the fierceness of the fighters reminded the Native Americans of the revered buffalo during the Indian Wars. The name was initially used to reference the cavalry, but quickly became synonymous with all four of the regiments.

The outstanding service of the Buffalo Soldiers continued during the Spanish American War. The war is often remembered by the charge of Lt. Col. Theodore Roosevelt up San Juan Hill. What is often forgotten is that the 24th Infantry, 9th and 10th Cavalry, charged alongside the 1st Volunteer Cavalry (Rough Riders). The Buffalo Soldiers fought with bravery, losing 26 men, but being recognized for valor and Edward L. Baker, Jr. being awarded the Medal of Honor.

Unfortunately, the period surrounding the Spanish American War corresponded with the rise of Jim Crow laws in the South. Following the Civil War, the various groups maneuvered to undermine equality for African Americans, with varying degrees of success. In 1896, however, the Supreme Court ruled in Plessy v. Ferguson racial segregation was legal. The policy would come to be known as “separate but equal.”

By World War I, “separate but equal” and the rise of Jim Crow laws had created a new wave of racially-charged discrimination. The Navy is a striking example of this. Despite representing a quarter of the Navy during the Civil War and consistently filling 20-30% of the Navy’s manpower in the latter half of the 19th century, African American’s opportunities in the Navy were abruptly curtailed in the early 1900s. During World War I, Black Sailors only represented 1.2% of the Navy, and these men were only allowed in the galley or the coal room.

The Army during World War I had more Black men serve in the branch but the situation was far from ideal. The first notable issue is the permanent Black regiments were sidelined in favor of newly-enlisted draftees. The permanent units were ordered to remain stateside and their leaders were pilfered to take up training posts for new recruits. This led to a situation in Houston, where the 24th Infantry was stationed. The local population were mistreating the Black Soldiers, who were upset about not fighting the war, lacking leadership after they had lost their senior noncommissioned officers and officers, and frustrated by the increasingly racist treatment by the local population. The situation erupted into what is known as the “Houston Riot of 1917” or the “Camp Logan Mutiny,” when men from the 24th armed themselves and killed 15 civilians, while losing four of their own.

For those who went to France, life was not much better. The open bias against Black troops meant most of them never fired a shot at the enemy. The majority were placed in pioneer infantry units, largely labor positions. A few Black units were able to prove themselves in two segregated combat divisions, the 92nd and 93rd. Gen. John J. Pershing, American Expeditionary Force commander, was being pressured to provide replacement troops to the exhausted French Army. Pershing decided to give the 93rd Division to the French Army. The French readily accepted the help, and treated their new Black allies largely as equals. One particular regiment of the 93rd Division would stand out, the 369th Infantry Regiment “Harlem Hellfighters.” The 369th spent more time on the front than any other American unit, and included the first Americans to be awarded the French Croix de Guerre. Some 404,000 Black officers and men would serve during World War I (an estimated 11% of the total force).

## World War II

Despite the proven valor of Black troops, Black Soldiers represented only 1.5% of the Army in June 1940, and roughly the same percentage of the Navy. The Marine Corps and Air Corps, on the other hand, were off limits completely. In that same year, Nazi troops were sweeping over France and Japan was solidifying its position in the Pacific. For this new war, Civil Rights leaders decided to take a different approach than their predecessors. In 1917, W.E.B. Du Bois said that Black Americans should not “bargain with our loyalty,” suggesting the civil rights struggle be paused during World War I African Americans were not perceived to be taking advantage of the situation. This policy had backfired, as despite African American’s willing service and exemplary record, they continued to face limitations. As World War II drew near, men from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, like Walter F. White, and T. Arnold Hill from the National Urban League, sought to use the new war to advance the status of the Black community.

This placed Black Americans in a tricky situation. If they supported the war effort fully, they feared the result would be similar to the events of World War I. If they didn’t support the war effort, they would face accusations of being un-American. The solution was presented by The Pittsburgh Courier, one of the predominant Black newspapers of the period. Following Pearl Harbor, the paper published a letter by James G. Thompson, where Thompson asked if he should sacrifice his life to live “Half American?” The paper responded by creating the “Double V Campaign.” Victory abroad and victory at home.

The campaign’s ideas were taken up across the country. One million Black men and women served in the military, and six million more worked within the defense industry. There could be no question of their loyalty. Simultaneously, however, many of the same individuals pushed for more access to branches like the Army Air Service and combat arms, expecting their loyalty to be recognized. Many believe the

“Double V” to be one of the opening skirmishes of the larger Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

[Skip to main content \(Press Enter\).](#)

In combat, many African American units served with distinction. The famed “Red Tails” of the 332nd Fighter Group broke down the barrier for Black pilots and air crews. Products of the segregated Tuskegee Army Airfield (which gave them the nickname of the “Tuskegee Airmen”),



would never see combat, as the war ended prior to their deployment.

On the ground, another famed unit would earn their place in American military lore, the 761st Tank Battalion “Black Panthers.” In October of 1944, the all-Black tank battalion would reach France and serve under Gen. George S. Patton, who famously told them he didn’t care what color they were as long as they were here to kill Germans. Patton continued, “Most of all, your race is looking forward to you. Don’t let them down, and, damn you, don’t let me down.” The 761st would go on to fight in 183 days of continuous combat including the Battle of the Bulge and the Battle of the Rhine. The 761st were awarded 11 Silver Stars, 69 Bronze Stars, 300 Purple Hearts, a Presidential Unit Citation and one Medal of Honor to Sgt. Warren G. H. Crecy.

## Integration

Following World War II, the push for civil rights and equality back home continued. The first victory abroad had been achieved. Victory at home, however, still proved elusive. Similar to Black veterans returning from World War I, the heroes of World War II often faced exclusion and aggression from the American populace. President Harry S. Truman was especially moved by the story of Isaac Woodard. Woodard had been arrested, beaten and blinded by South Carolina police officers on Feb. 12, 1946. Woodard had been honorably discharged from the Army only a few hours prior, and was even still in uniform when he was attacked.

President Truman took action by forming the President’s Committee on Civil Rights in 1946. The committee reported to the president the pressing need to end segregation and discrimination within the Armed Forces. On July 26, 1948, Truman responded with Executive Order 9981 directing the military to end segregation. The first article stated, “There shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion or national origin.”

Despite the order, the president faced push back from many of the leaders within the military. The leading generals argued that officers would not promote or send Black troops for schools, while their white counterparts would become violent due to being forced together. The recent experience of combat, however, showed this to be inaccurate. The majority of men and officers who fought with Black units, reported they performed admirably and would not have issues serving alongside black units again. White units which had not served with Black Soldiers tended to reflect the racial views the generals feared.

Despite the vast array of studies conducted during World War II, and despite the executive order, there were still delays. The first branch to fully integrate (an integrated unit was considered any unit with 49% or less Black representation) was the United States Air Force. For the Air Force, not only did they have the excellent example of the 332nd to refer to, but they also faced the reality of the need for as many trained specialists as possible. Unlike the Army which could push vast numbers of unskilled recruits to labor units, the Air Force required technical skill and expertise to ensure aircraft remained functional. Under the old system, the Air Force only had one Black flying group, yet were required to have a 10% quota of Black recruits. Regardless of how many Black Airmen were serving, they only trained enough specialists to keep the single segregated flying group in the air. Despite these men’s desire to perform their trade, the majority were prohibited from doing so. Recognizing this waste, the Air Force began adhering to the president’s policy, fully integrating by 1952.

The other branches followed. Once again, practical measures outweighed racial beliefs. As the United States engaged in the Korean War, manpower was at a premium. By 1951, the Army’s nine training divisions were integrated, and Black recruitment was on the rise. Additionally, Black members of the Army and Marine Corps were serving in combat at the same ratio as white men. Combat integration failed to produce the violence or poor morale the military brass had expected. By 1953, the number of Black Marines had grown from 1,900 in 1949 to 17,000. Finally, in November 1954, the Army reported it was fully integrated.

The military of any nation is a reflection of the social milieu within that nation’s borders. The ending of segregation within the U.S. armed forces reflected a country that was ready for change. The same year the military completed integration the Supreme Court ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education*, overturning “separate but equal.” Military service was vital in transforming how Black American’s were viewed. Through sacrifice and valor, Black Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen earned their position among America’s heroes. Their blood and sweat earned their freedom no different than any other patriot, despite it taking much longer for that sacrifice to be recognized.